

REMOVING MERCURY FROM MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOLS

Background

The Partnership for Environmental Health & Safety in Schools is a program of the Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance and Technology (OTA) that assists public secondary schools in identifying and safely managing hazardous chemicals, with the goal of reducing, replacing or eliminating them from the school environment.

Why Mercury?

Mercury is poisonous and can damage the nervous system, kidneys, liver and immune system. Typical exposures to mercury come from breathing its fumes during an accidental spill or leak, or by eating fish contaminated with mercury. Children are most at risk from mercury's toxic effects and can suffer potentially serious neurological damage.

Devices or chemicals that contain mercury, and jars of elemental mercury, are a liability for schools. Improper handling of mercury and accidents that result in a spill can cause significant health problems, with serious financial and legal consequences.

How OTA can help

Schools participating in the OTA program must complete a hazardous materials assessment, and clean out their stock of chemicals that are old or no longer needed by the schools. Elemental mercury and mercury compounds are among the hazardous materials targeted for removal.

Three firms that operate waste-to-energy plants within the state have volunteered to assist the schools with mercury issues and proper removal. These firms will accept mercury from schools, and replace some types of mercury-bearing devices with those that do not contain mercury.

Here's what to do:

1. Identify the sources of mercury. Attached to this fact sheet is a checklist developed by the Northeast Waste Management Officials Association (NEWMOA) that will help you identify sources of mercury in different locations within your school
2. If you find any of the devices or compounds that contain mercury, isolate them from students, faculty and staff
3. Check the list on the back of this fact sheet to see which of the waste-to-energy firms serves your community. Call the person who is identified to help you dispose of your mercury devices or compounds; if your community is not served by any of the waste-to-energy firms, contact Susan Lanza at 617-626-1068 or by email at: susan.lanza@state.ma.us.

To Recycle Mercury From Schools

If you live in one of these towns, you are served by the SEMass waste-to-energy plant. Call Sidi Mateo at 508-291-4427.

Acushnet	Edgartown	Mattapoisett	Sudbury
Attleboro	Fairhaven	Middleboro	Truro
Barnstable	Falmouth	Milton	W. Bridgewater
Bellingham	Freetown	Norfolk	Waltham
Berkley	Halifax	Norwell	Wareham
Blackstone	Hanover	Orleans	Wellfleet
Bourne	Hanson	Pembroke	Weymouth
Braintree	Harwich	Plymouth	Whitman
Brewster	Hingham	Plympton	Wrentham
Canton	Holbrook	Provincetown	Yarmouth
Carver	Hyannis	Randolph	
Chatham	Kingston	Rochester	
Cohasset	Lakeville	Rockland	
Dennis	Marion	Sandwich	
Dighton	Martha's	Scituate	
Duxbury	Vineyard	Sharon	
Eastham	Mashpee	Stoughton	

If you live in one of these towns, you are served by a Wheelabrator Technologies waste-to-energy plant. Call Patrick Scanlon at 978-475-1776.

Acton	Hamilton	Millville	Southborough
Andover	Holden	Natick	Spencer
Arlington	Holliston	Needham	Tewksbury
Auburn	Hopedale	Newton	Upton
Bedford	Hopkinton	North Andover	Walpole
Belmont	Lexington	Northborough	Watertown
Beverly	Lincoln	Northbridge	Wenham
Billerica	Lowell	North Reading	Westborough
Boxborough	Lynn	Oxford	West Newbury
Burlington	Malden	Paxton	Westford
Carlisle	Manchester	Peabody	Weston
Chelsea	Maynard	Princeton	Westwood
Dover	Medfield	Revere	Wilmington
Dracut	Medway	Rockport	Winchester
E. Brookfield	Mendon	Rutland	Worcester
Everett	Milford	Saugus	
Franklin	Millbury	Sherborn	
Grafton	Millis	Shrewsbury	

If you live in one of these towns, you are served by the Covanta waste-to-energy plant. Call Steve Parker at 978-372-6288.

Ayer	Groton	Lynnfield	Stoneham
Chelmsford	Haverhill	Melrose	Wakefield
Danvers	Lawrence	Middleton	
Essex	Littleton	Reading	